

59-416

Assistant Director, Office of Operation

14 June 1948

Chief, Foreign Documents Branch

Evacuation of Impounded Documents from Korea

Since there is almost no information on Russia and her Far Eastern Satellites available in the English language, it follows that the necessary data, both basic and current, must be obtained from foreign language sources. Among the most fruitful and comprehensive of these are naturally those that were produced by the antagonists of Russia on the eastern front in the late war. The Japanese war machine accumulated a mass of detailed information which was built up through the work of special organizations over a period of years in both peace and war on not only pre-war Russia, but also on the territory under her direct or indirect control and must, for purposes of considering Russia's war potential, be given equal and serious detailed consideration.

It is believed that large quantities of such information is represented by foreign language publications, impounded or otherwise, and are still available in Korea. The seriousness of the international situation in Korea has brought to the forefront the necessity of formulating a plan of emergency evacuation and/or destruction or abandonment of impounded documents due to possible exigencies wherein seizure of these documents by a potential enemy is imminent. Aggressive and definite action to determine the following categories of documents for appropriate disposition should be expeditiously inaugurated:

- a. Those which are of basic intelligence value to the United States.
- b. Those whose possession by an enemy power would be detrimental to the United States.
- c. Those whose possession by an enemy power might result in undue hardship to indigenous personnel.

It is recommended that an inquiry be directed to the Department of Army in regards to the present status of documents in Korea. Specifically the following information is desired:

- a. What categories or general classification of documents (economic, historical, political, government, etc.) are presently available in Korea under Army jurisdiction? Military government jurisdiction? State Department jurisdiction? In what languages are these documents in general?

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- b. Are there any document repositories or collections not now under U.S. control bearing on Russia, Manchuria, Mengolia, China or Korea that could be requisitioned by U.S.?
- c. Is there an emergency plan in existence or in actual operation for evacuation of impounded documents from Korea?
- d. What will be the ultimate disposition of documents now in U.S. possession?

There is a need for obtaining this information as soon as possible. With imminent withdrawal of United States Forces and subsequent establishment of State Department Consulates in Korea, the importance of procuring necessary information for operational use in the field and long range use in Washington cannot be disregarded. The same type and amount of information required by the State Department is also required by CIA and other intelligence agencies in Washington.

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Attention is called to the attached memorandum prepared by [] who personally visited the area as a documents screener.

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[]
Colonel, FA.

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Encl: Atchd.

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